



Public Education and Government Television Channel Task Force

Meeting Summary

March 4, 2008

Date of Meeting: March 4, 2008

The Public Education and Government Television Channel Task Force met in the Information Technology Building at 481 West Paseo Redondo, Tucson, AZ 85701.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Ryan Bruce, Task Force Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:10 a.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Ryan Bruce, Lisa Contreras, John Hall, Neil Markowitz, Matthew Muehlebach, Augustine Romero, and Frank Velasco

Staff Members Present: Julie Stevens and Ann Strine

3. INTRODUCTION OF NEW TASK FORCE MEMBER

Frank Velasco was recently appointed by Council Member Romero. He comes to the Task Force as a life-long resident of Tucson and brings experience from a wide array of past PEG channel involvement. He currently works as a photographer for KVOA.

4. REVIEW OF 2.07.2008 MINUTES

A motion to approve the 02.07.2008 meeting minutes was seconded and carried unanimously by a voice vote.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

No discussion

6. PEG CHANNEL PRESENTATIONS / Q&A

Each of the PEG organizations presented an overview of their respective strategic plans (including mission/vision), goals, financial analysis, programming, 'dreams' for the future, and process evaluation information (how do they gauge/measure their performance) and then addressed member questions.

Channel 12. Jennifer McKinney, Television Production Manager, represented Channel 12. Highlights of the presentation/Q&A period included:

- Focus is on quality of programming vs. quantity, although hours produced has increased from 92 minutes per month in 2005 to 254 minutes in 2007.
- Channel 12's web presence has been updated. A growing number of streams and a new "YouTube" collaboration has helped to reach around the globe and expand into a whole new demographic.
- Fewer Public Service Announcements are being produced, however, they continue to assist with department training videos, duplication services, and Closed Caption/SAP broadcasts.



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- Goals/Measurements/Dreams include: continue to promote Mayor and Council strategic priorities, develop ways to capture a younger audience, and expand to reach throughout the valley. A number of program awards were received again this year; they will use results of a recent survey to determine what can be done differently or better. Ideally, they could be found on Channel 12 wherever they broadcast, but their number one dream would be to have a full-time webmaster; this would allow podcasts and real-time web dialogues with the Mayor and Council, among other things.
- John Hall asked about channel funding: Channel 12 is budgeted under the City's Information Technology department; they are currently facing a \$130K deficit. Previously, any PEG allocations could be used toward capital expenditures only; however, now dollars go directly into the General Fund.
- Matt Muehlebach sought clarification on how "directives" were issued by Mayor and Council for strategic plan/goals and what is driving the "expansion" through Pima County. Jennifer replied that staff has drawn direction/plans from the City Strategic Plan, Mayor and Council meetings, and through the development of "My City", produced in conjunction with each city ward office. The drive toward expanding Channel 12 throughout Pima County is part of the City Manager's desire to move toward more regional government. Many issues overlap city/county services; the aim is to make the best use of dollars.

TUSD-TV. Mary Canty, TUSD-TV Producer, and Chryl Lander, Director of Communications and Media Relations, presented on behalf of TUSD-TV. Points raised during the presentation/Q&A period included:

- TUSD-TV believes strongly that PEG dollars should fund all three channels—including the education channel. It would be desirable to move toward an environment where creativity and resources can be shared and to build an education station for the entire region; TUSD's staff has a strong voice to bring to the process. Diverse funding is essential for success; a regional media center would address many issues.
- Mary coordinates the needs and programming for all of the districts they serve, including Catalina and Sunnyside. Although these districts provide revenue, their overall funding is less than in October 2007 and they run the genuine risk of "going dark".
- Mary emphasized their belief that a strong education station would be a positive impact on the community and go a long way toward engaging citizens—the recent school closing meetings being a prime example. Additionally, the benefits to be reaped by building self-esteem in the students, via their involvement with the station, increase the likelihood that they in turn will be future active stakeholders in their communities.
- They have laid out specific targets for adding program contributors, increasing the number of participating districts as well as those providing funding, and seeking representation on advisory boards—to name a few.
- A question Mary poses for consideration is that it could be valuable to "look at future trends in delivery services", considering there may come a time when television is not the medium of choice. Additionally, there are benefits to the community by negotiating for resources collectively.
- Mary addressed questions regarding the channel's budget, clarified which actual operating expenses were ongoing, and explained that dollars received from Sunnyside are set aside as a reserves. She shared an instance where a community asset (AccessTucson's mobile unit) was recently used for a reduced rate.

AccessTucson. Sam Behrend, Executive Director, spoke for AccessTucson. Among the topics addressed during the presentation/Q&A period:

- AccessTucson is in the final stages of developing their Strategic Plan; public meetings will soon be scheduled to garner community input and approval.
- Sam wanted to provide a "let's get real" perspective. He referenced a chart of cable fees and noted instances of AccessTucson funding decreases. He urged the Task Force to consider putting forward a recommendation that any funding be as predictable as possible—perhaps a percentage of cable revenue.



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- They had 2457 hours of locally produced, first run shows; pride is taken in not only the quantity of production time, but also the caliber. Access Tucson's mission is to "serve everyone": with 21,000 members representing an array of individuals as well as organizations, it can be said that they also help to support the missions of these varying organizations.
- Gauges of success are measured by collecting formal surveys from their users and reviewing "ratings", with the proper perspective. Sam explained that although their market share can be seen as quite small, when compared with other commercial channels, both AccessTucson and Channel 12 bode quite well (he gave "Fox Sports" as an example).
- Lisa Contreras and Neil Markowitz posed questions on the Strategic Plan approval process. Sam advised that the AccessTucson Board was the approving authority. Lisa asked why the City of Tucson did not play a role, considering their funding support. Mr. Behrend explained that there are reporting mechanisms in place and opportunities for input, but the organization was established as independent. Reporting to the City Manager and Mayor & Council goes through Ann Strine.
- There was discussion regarding the feasibility and palatability of AccessTucson housing TUSD-TV in their facilities in exchange for additional budget dollars. Sam and Mary Canty both expressed they would be open to dialogue, but there would be a number of considerations to be addressed. In these lean times, there is a sense of urgency with TUSD-TV facing potential staff cuts and AccessTucson attempting to cope with the loss of the \$100K they were expecting from the Cox Communications settlement.

This dialogue led the group to re-visiting a previous discussion relative to a Community Media Center. Should the Task Force move forward with spending time on this as a future formal agenda topic? With governments facing budget shortfalls, the consolidation and sharing of resources could prove more attractive now than in the past. It was agreed that a timeframe for influencing the city's budget process is needed. There were mixed feelings and concern about what affect any recommendations the group makes could ultimately have. Augustine Romero and Neil pointed out the importance of recognizing long-term/big picture implications. John Hall spoke about sending a message—status quo will no longer suffice; all options need to be considered.

7. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION / SCHEDULE NEXT MEETING

Staff was requested to please obtain information from the City's Finance/Budget office on what impact, if any, Task Force recommendations can have on the upcoming fiscal year's budget. The next meeting will be held on March 18. A chunk of time will be devoted to reviewing information from the presentations and continuing to delineate the scope of the Task Force recommendation, in light of current deficits and the fact that the budget process is already in the advanced stages. Matt stated decisions on level of commitment could be made after additional discussions.

8. CALL TO THE AUDIENCE

No discussion.

9. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by John Hall, seconded by Lisa Contreras, and unanimously approved 6 to 0 (Frank Velasco left meeting earlier) by a voice vote. The meeting was then adjourned at 1:20 p.m.